

Message Text

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12

ACTION AF-05

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 A-01 /007 W

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P 130945Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8011

UNCLAS ABIDJAN 2918

FOR AF/EX

E O 11652: NA

TAGS: APER/IV

SUBJ: LOCAL SALARIES

1. POST URGENTLY REQUESTS AF/EX SEND TEAM TO ABIDJAN ASAP TO ASSIST IN PERFORMING COMPREHENSIVE WAGE SURVEY TO REVISE AND REVAMP LOCAL COMPENSATION PLAN. PLAN WAS INSTITUTED IN OCT, 1971 AND RECENTLY REVISED AS OF AUGUST 1, 1973 TO REFLECT GOVERNMENT WAGE RAISE DECREE. A SECOND WAGE INCREASE OF FROM 5 TO 20 PERCENT HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BY POST BECAUSE OF LACK OF FUNDS.

2. POST FEELS THAT CHANGES OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS HAVE CALLED INTO QUESTION SOME BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF THE 1971 PLAN AND A MAJOR REVISION IS CALLED FOR. THE MAJOR DIFFICULTY WILL BE TO DESIGN A PLAN THAT WILL ALLOW THE POST TO PAY A COMPETITIVE WAGE WHILE MINIMIZING THE BUDGETARY IMPACT. A COROLLARY DIFFICULTY WILL BE TO DESIGN A PLAN THAT WILL ALLOW THE POST TO COMPETE FOR HIGH PRICED, SCARCE SKILL TALENT WITHOUT DISTORTING THE WAGE PLAN AND AT THE SAME TIME MAKE PROVISION FOR EMPLOYEES WHO ARE ALREADY ON THE PAYROLL BUT BEING PAID AT OLD, LOW RATES.

3. SINCE BUDGETARY CONTRAINTS WILL BE GOVERNING FOR THE NEAR TERM, POST FEELS THAT BUREAU PARTICIPATION IS ESSENTIAL.

4. REASONS FOR THE GRADUAL EROSION OF THE WAGE PLAN STEM FROM THE GROWTH IN DEMAND IN ABIDJAN FOR WELL QUALIFIED BILINGUAL
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EMPLOFEES AND THEIR RELATIVE SCARCITY, THE DOLLAR DEVALUATIONS,

LARR THE RAMPANT INFLATION IN ABIDJAN.

5. RESULTS ARE THAT POST HAS BECOME SERIOUSLY UNCOMPETITIVE IN TRYING TO ATTRACT SCARCE SKILL POSITIONS SUCH AS BILINGUAL SECRETARIES AND TRANSLATORS, THAT PRESENT EMPLOYEES ARE DISCONTENT, THAT POST IS DEFICIENT IN ITS FRINGE BENEFIT STRUCTURE FOR ALL EMPLOYEES, THAT OTHER AGENCIES HAVE BECOME VERY RESTIVE AT STATES'S FISCAL INABILITY TO CHANGE THE SITUATION. POST FEELS STRONGLY, HOWEVER, THAT WHILE A STRAIGHT RAISE IN BASIC SALARY WOULD OBVIOUSLY HELP, THAT THERE IS STILL A PRESSING NEED TO REDESIGN THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE PLAN ITSELF.

6. POST STRESSES URGENT NATURE OF THIS REVIEW SINCE AGENCIES WHO HAVE FUNDS ARE EXERTING PRESSURE TO HIRE QUALIFIED PERSONNEL AT THE GOING RATE AND POST WISHES TO AVOID SITUATION OF UNEQUAL PAY FOR EQUIVALENT WORK, WHICH WILL EXACERBATE MORALE PROBLEMS OF EMPLOYEES ALREADY ON THE PAYROLL. THESE EMPLOYEES ARE ALREADY DISGRUNTLED BECAUSE THEY THINK THEY ARE RECEIVING INADEQUATE COMPENSATION AND FRINGE BENEFITS COMPARED TO PRIVATE INDUSTRY. IN SOME CASES THESE EMPLOYEES HAVE SPENT YEARS WORKING THEIR WAY UP THE PAY SCALE. TO BRING IN NEW PEOPLE WHO HAVE TO BE TRAINED AT SIMILAR PAY SCALES WILL CAUSE PROBLEMS. AND THE ONLY WAY TO CHANGE THEIR RATE OF COMPENSATION IS THE APPROVAL OF A REVISED LOCAL COMPENSATION PLAN.
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